

Steve Westly California State Controller



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PRISON TERM FOR THEFT OF STATE WARRANTS

Sacramento, July 22, 2003 – A Los Angeles man who intercepted and fraudulently attempted to cash state warrants was sentenced in Los Angeles Superior Court to 16 months in state Prison, State Controller Steve Westly announced today.

Blaise Nwene was sentenced after pleading guilty to two counts each of theft and forgery, and one count of grand theft. Nwene intercepted three state warrants worth \$1.6 million, payable to Basic Fiber, Inc., a Los Angeles business. The warrants didn't clear because a stop payment was imposed after the intended payee reported having never received them.

"We have zero tolerance for con artists who think they can rob the people of California," Westly said. "They belong behind bars."

State Controllers Office investigators discovered the crime and investigated, along with agents from the Sacramento Valley Regional Hi-Tech Crimes/Identification Theft Task Force, the Southern California Hi-Tech Task Force, and the Attorney General's office.

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